

**Congressional Testimony**  
**Committee on Homeland Security**  
**Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Science and Technology**

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Chairman Reichert, members of the Committee, my name is Mario Treviño, and I am Chief of the Bellevue, Washington, Fire Department. For your reference, the City of Bellevue is located approximately 10 miles East of Seattle. We also provide fire and Emergency Medical Services to five other townships, serving a total population of approximately 135,000 people. We are part of the renowned King County Medic One Program, and have the further responsibility of providing Advanced Life Support to a 300 square mile area with a total population of 250,000 people.

To the visiting members of the Committee, welcome to Washington, and thank you all for the opportunity to speak to you about regional planning and preparedness, particularly as related to our area of focus – how we work together to identify and prioritize Homeland Security allocations. We are all concerned about Homeland Security from a national perspective, and I should point my background should be helpful in these discussions. In the regional arena, I am the Chairman of the King County Zone 1 Fire Chiefs. My national involvement includes serving as Vice-Chairman of the Emergency Response Technology Group of the National Technology Transfer Center, and being a member and past Chair of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs.

The Puget Sound urban area has a strong history of regional collaboration and mutual support in the emergency planning, management, and response arenas. This experience level, combined with effective working-relationships provide a basis which has served as a cornerstone for our process, upon which we have added sharp focus in recent years on homeland security issues.

Some examples of this collaborative process include:

1. The development of emergency management systems in King County, and the subsequent networking to address regional and national issues.
2. The development of effective Hazardous Materials training and response capabilities. The City of Bellevue is a member of the Eastside Hazardous

Materials Consortium which provides protection for much of Eastern King County.

3. The enhancement of emergency responder safety through training and the procurement of equipment such as personal protective equipment (PPE), detection and disposal equipment for explosive devices, and Hazardous Materials equipment.
4. Planning for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Explosive response, detection and recovery.
5. Joint training initiatives, such as Incident Management Team (IMT) training, which is multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional.
6. Joint training partnerships, such as the Seattle/Bellevue exercises in: Rescue Systems (structural collapse); High-rise Firefighting; Weapons of Mass Destruction scenarios; Mass-transportation scenarios; and Improvised Explosive Devices (IAD) scenarios.
7. Pandemic Influenza planning.

In February, 2004, the Seattle-King County Urban area developed an urban area strategy. The strategy was developed by the principal jurisdictions involved in the Seattle-King County Core Group, which makes core decisions: Seattle; King County; Pierce County; Snohomish County; and the Washington State Military Department. It also featured input from other governmental organizations that fall within the boundaries of the urban area. The City of Bellevue was added to the Seattle-King County Urban Area Core Group as a result of the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) in 2006.

The urban strategy is closely integrated with the Region 6 Homeland Strategic Plan, which was also developed in 2004 for the allocation of State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSP) funding applied to geographic King County. There is substantial multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional representation among the various groups that develop and implement these plans, which helps reinforce the need and benefit of broad involvement from emergency responders. With these plans in place, our urban area is poised to deal with the challenges ahead for all hazards and homeland security planning and response.

Some of our recent challenges have come in the area of trying to integrate our established process with shifting federal processes and priorities. For example:

1. Timelines were condensed during the 2006 grant cycle, making it very difficult to develop a comprehensive, inclusive, and thoughtful grant strategy. It is important for Congress to be specific in providing direction to the Department of Homeland Security so that grant processes allow time for sufficient regional collaboration
2. Grant processes change annually, and are not reported out in a timely manner, forcing changes in regional processes. Regional partnerships involve difficult and time-consuming work, and dramatic changes to regional processes requires significant re-balancing at the State and local level, which results in frustration and lost time. Ultimately, this means we

spend more time developing the process and less time focused on prioritizing and implementing projects.

3. Increased flexibility in grant funding remains a need so that urban areas can target grant funds to their areas of greatest need such as:
  - a. Coordinated planning efforts to assure critical infrastructure protection needs are prioritized, including but not limited to: information technology; water systems; and facility hardening.
  - b. Equipment procurement and evaluation to ensure interoperability and responder preparedness
  - c. Training and Exercise development, implementation and evaluation to prepare responders, city leaders, and elected officials for a major response.
  - d. Development and implementation of planning documents which may include state and local governance and continuity of government.

Jurisdictions within our urban area are participating in the current review of the National Response Plan that is occurring in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Catastrophic events require community-to-community, urban area to urban area, and state-to-state planning. It is important that federal policy encourage continued and further collaboration that spans beyond the borders of our communities.

Some of the next steps I see for our urban area include continuing to:

1. Build and streamline our partnerships on a regional level,
2. Further build our response capabilities leveraging existing resources and existing mutual aid commitments,
3. Streamline and improve the efficiency of our intelligence capabilities,
4. Refine and develop our regional plans,
5. And train across jurisdictional borders.

That concludes my prepared remarks. Thank you Chairman Reichert and members of the Committee for allowing me to participate in this hearing today.